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Title : Need to include six tribes of Assam into the list of Scheduled Tribes.

SHRI SARBANANDA SONOWAL : Sir, I would like to draw the attention of this House and the Government of India to the matter relating to grant of ST status to six tribes, namely, Tea and Ex-Tea Tribes, Tai-Ahoms, Chutias, Koch-Rajbonghshis, Moran and Mattaks of the State of Assam and pray for kind and early intervention in this regard.

These tribes, namely, Tea and Ex-Tea Tribes, comprising of 97 tribes, Koch-Rajbonghshis, Tai-Ahoms, Morans, Mattaks and Chutias during the last several years individually as well as collectively made several representations before the Government of India and also met the hon. Prime Minister of India, hon. Union Minister of Tribal Affairs and other hon. Union Ministers with the prayer for granting ST status (Plains) to these backward tribes of the State, but to no avail. In this regard, it is pertinent to mention that the Government of Assam has also recommended inclusion of these tribes in the list of ST (Plains) on several occasions since 1993.

The Parliamentary Select Committee, which was constituted in relation to Bill No.21, 1996 under the Chairmanship of Shri Amar Roy Pradhan, the then Member of Parliament presented its report on August 14, 1997 to Lok Sabha recommending inclusion of Koch-Rajbongshi, Tai-Ahom, Moran, Mattak, Chutia and various tribes belonging to Tea and Ex-Tea Garden Tribes of Assam after their several field visits to Assam and in-depth study into the subject.

I take this privilege to draw the kind attention of the Central Government, through you, that even after the said Select Committee of the Parliament recommended to the Government of India for scheduling of these communities, the Government of India, however, has not taken any concrete steps after submission of the report and the draft Bill.

The Memorialists are of the firm view that scheduling of the six tribes of Other Backward Classes in the State of Assam would not in any way affect the status of the existing Scheduled Tribes people of Assam. The Select Committee of the Parliament has, on its own, recommended increase of the reservation quota for the Scheduled Tribes in the State and stated that the Government may explore the possibility to increase adequate quota of the Scheduled Tribes without disturbing the original quota of reservation, when these tribes recommended by the Select Committee are ultimately added to the List of Scheduled Tribes in the State of Assam.

In view of the above, I strongly demand the Central Government to consider the inclusion of the above-mentioned tribes in the List of Scheduled Tribes (Plains) by introducing a Bill in the current Session of the Parliament without any further delay.

DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA : Sir, I associate myself with what Shri Sonowal has just now said.